

# Executive Summary

In July 2021, the Oregon legislature established the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program (ECSEPP) and a prohibition on the use of suspension and expulsion, going into effect on July 1, 2026, as promulgated in House Bill 2166 (“HB2166”) and Senate Bill 236 (“SB236”). The purposes of the ECSEPP are to: reduce the use of suspension, expulsion, and other forms of exclusionary discipline in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and child care programs; and reduce disparities in the use of suspension, expulsion, and other forms of exclusionary practices in ECE and child care programs based on race, ethnicity, language, ability, gender, or any other protected class.

In June 2023, the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC) commissioned the Coalition of Communities of Color to design and conduct a research study on suspension and expulsion in Oregon’s early learning and care environments, focusing on ways to reduce the use of those practices. The research included a secondary data collection of published data on the subject and two primary data collection efforts: 1) a resource mapping survey on early childhood educator’s reactions to ECE resources, and 2) qualitative findings on educators experiences and desires about what will help them to prevent suspension and expulsion. Summaries of each and the study’s overall recommendations are included below. DELC’s response letter in chapter six provides an agency/system level response and context review.

## Suspension and Expulsion in Oregon:

- Oregon families reported that in 2020, 6.3% of all children were suspended or expelled and in 2022, it increased to 9.1% of all children (2016 national survey reported 2.2%)
- Rates of S&E in 2022 by race/ethnicity: 17.2% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 16.1% African American/Black, 10.6% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 10.3% Latine, 7.7% white
- Rates of S&E in 2022 by language: 20% Mandarin, 15% Vietnamese, 12% Spanish, 8% English
- Rates of S&E in 2022 by disability: 22.1% with individualized family service plan (IFSP), disability, medical need; 7.1% without IFSP (2016 national survey reported 5.4%)
- Provider types more likely to S&E: community-based center, 25.6%; child care co-located in K-12 schools, 25.1%; urban, 21.2%
- Provider types less likely to S&E: family or home based child care; 10.1% urban 14% rural

## Reactions to available and used Resources (Survey):

- This survey provided a high-level overview of the existing resources available to early childhood educators across different child care programs in the state of Oregon. These resources represent those funded by local, state and federal systems.
- Educators reported accessing a variety of different resources across different programs.
- Educators generally reported higher levels of satisfaction with the resources they accessed, however, they also shared opportunities for improvements. Suggested improvements were resource specific. Practical skills sharing and education, especially those that increase accessibility and inclusion in the classroom

## Desired supports to prevent suspension and expulsions (Interviews/Focus Groups):

- Interviews and focus groups with early childhood educators identified strategies of supporting educators and better allow them to keep children in care settings. They also identified provider perceived “gaps in support” that

if addressed would allow educators to better focus on children and families.

- Early educators described the importance of establishing a relationship with a child first, as central to the profession of child care. A Child First Care approach is considered essential to all other strategies that support educators, children and families.
- The majority of the early educators identified strategies that were centered around interpersonal relationships (i.e., early educator and -child, -family, -early educator, -specialist).
- Early educators described their experiences engaging with dominant systems, which represent agencies at local, state and federal levels. A few early educators we heard from offered high praise for local and state level support, while the majority referenced often feeling uninformed, overburdened, and unsupported.

#### **Recommendations of early educators:**

- Regional focus and regional leader control to prevent suspension and expulsion
- One-on-one support and opportunities for follow-up and feedback from educators
- Responsive and accountable systems that are well coordinated through systems, follow up, and communications around resources
- Short term recommendations
  - Communication and guidance about the prohibition
  - Regional collaboration
  - Child care-centered trainings
  - Audit of administrative systems
- Long term recommendations
  - Connecting Peers
  - Accessible Resources
  - Family Supports
  - Workplace Supports
  - Business Development Supports

